

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTEV 01342 211618Z

51

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 AID-20 OMB-01 IO-14 OPR-02 DRC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6555

INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

USCINCSO

DOD/DIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 1342

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, UY

SUBJ: FERMENT IN THE ARMY CONTINUING

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

REFS: (A) MVD 1336

(B) MVD 1337

1. SUMMARY: AFTER NIGHT OF WILD RUMORS OF ARRESTS
(WHICH PROVED TO BE FALSE), SITUATION STILL NOT DEFINED.
ARMY GENERALS MET DURING NIGHT AND LATEST AVAILABLE
INFORMATION INDICATES ARMY CINC LTG CHIAPPE AND OTHER
MODERATES MAY HAVE LOST POWER PLAY (REFTEL A) AS RESULT
OF FIRST DIVISION COMMANDER GENERAL CRISTI HAVING
DECIDED TO SUPPORT FELLOW DIVISION COMMANDERS AGAINST
THE CINC. SUDDEN INTENSIFICATION OF ARMY'S PROCESS OF
DEFINITION BELIEVED TO HAVE RESULTED FROM DEATH OF VICE
PRESIDENT ETCHEGOYEN AND SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS ABOUT
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PAGE 02 MONTEV 01342 211618Z

HIS REPLACEMENT WHICH LED TO BROADER DEBATE ON OVERALL

ARMY POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE ADMINISTRATION. IF, AS NOW SEEMS POSSIBLE, CHIAPPE AND OTHER MODERATES ARE ON THE WAY OUT THE PROSPECT OF INCREASED MILITARY PRESSURE ON PRESIDENT BORDABERRY HAS GROWN SUBSTANTIALLY. END SUMMARY.

2. RUMORS OF ARRESTS REPORTED IN REFTEL (B) FALSE. IT APPEARS THAT FIRST DIVISION COMMANDER GENERAL CRISTI ON EVENING MAY 20 THREW HIS LOT IN WITH THE OTHER DIVISION COMMANDERS (THE TWO ZUBIAS AND GENERAL ALVAREZ) AND TURNED THE ARMY TIDE AGAINST ARMY CINC CHIAPPE. DAO REPORTS INDICATE THAT LTG CHIAPPE AND GENERALS DARDO GROSSI (CHIEF OF STAFF), LUIS FORTEZA (DIRECTOR OF MILITARY INSTITUTE FOR SUPERIOR STUDIES) AND ANTONIO CIRILLO (DIRECTOR, SCHOOL OF ARMS AND SERVICES) WERE, ON MORNING MAY 21, PREPARING TO LEAVE THEIR POSTS. CHIAPPE TRIED A POWER PLAY OPPOSED BY MOST OF HIS COLLEAGUES AND MAY HAVE LOST WHEN GENERAL CRISTI DEFINED HIS POSITION. HOWEVER, GENERALS STILL MEETING AND SITUATION NOT AT ALL CLEAR.

3. IT NOW APPEARS THAT IT WAS THE MAY 18 DEATH OF VICE PRESIDENT ETCHEGOYEN WHICH INTENSIFIED THE MILITARY'S DEBATES ON ITS POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE PRESIDENT. GENERALS CRISTI, REPORTEDLY SUPPORTED BY FOURTH DIVISION COMMANDER GEN. ALVAREZ, URGED THAT RETIRED GEN. MARIO AGUERRONDO BE NAMED VICE PRESIDENT. CRISTI HAD LONG WANTED AGUERRONDO IN THE GOVERNMENT AND ETCHEGOYEN'S DEATH PROVIDED PRECISELY THE VACANCY CRISTI PREFERRED FOR HIS MENTOR--THE LINE OF DIRECT SUCCESSION TO THE PRESIDENCY. WE HAVE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT BORDABERRY BALKED AND THAT AGUERRONDO DID NOT WANT THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE, THE OTHER HAT WORN BY ETCHEGOYEN. LTGEN CHAIPE ALSO BALKED, WANTING A MILITARY JUNTA (IN WHICH HE WOULD BE THE SENIOR OFFICER) TO BE WAITING IN THE WINGS WHEN BORDABERRY EITHER RESIGNED IN DISGUST OR WAS REMOVED. THE ENSUING DEBATE BROUGHT GENERAL OFFICERS INTO CONFRONTATION, RESULTED IN CHIAPPE'S MAY 20 ORDER TO THE GENERALS ZUBIA TO RELINQUISH THEIR COMMANDS AND BROUGHT ON THE SUBSEQUENT REPORTED MOVE BY A MAJORITY

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PAGE 03 MONTEV 01342 211618Z

OF THE GENERALS AGAINST CHAIPE AND HIS MODERATE COLLEAGUES.

4. CRISTI AND A NUMBER OF OTHER SENIOR OFFICERS HAVE LONG QUESTIONED CHIAPPE'S INTEGRITY BECAUSE OF A NUMBER OF SHADY BUSINESS DEALS IN WHICH HE SUPPOSEDLY WAS INVOLVED. NEVERTHELESS, CHIAPPE, A PACHECO APPOINTEE, IS ONE OF THE MOST MODERATE, POLITICIZED AND POLITICALLY

ASTUTE GENERAL OFFICERS. IF HE HAS BEEN EFFECTIVELY REMOVED, AS NOW SEEMS POSSIBLE, ALONG WITH A NUMBER OF OTHER GENERALS OF SIMILAR VIEWS, INCREASED MILITARY PRESSURES ON THE PRESIDENT IS LIKELY.

5. NOTHING ABOUT ABOVE MOVES HAS APPEARED IN ANY OF THE LOCAL MEDIA SO FAR BUT, AS INDICATED IN MLD 1337, ELEMENTS OF THE MEDIA WERE CLEARLY WIRED IN ON THE SPATE OF RUMORS WHICH WERE PROVOKED BY THE INTRA-ARMY MANEUVERINGS. THE FACT THAT PRESIDENT BORDABERRY HAD SPENT THE ENTIRE DAY AT HIS RESIDENCE POSSIBLY CONTRIBUTED, IN THIS ATMOSPHERE, TO THE RUMORS OF HIS "HOUSE ARREST". IT IS ALSO KNOWN THAT FONMIN BLANCO SPENT MANY HOURS WITH THE PRESIDENT AT HIS RESIDENCE YESTERDAY--A SESSION PROBABLY NOT WARRANTED BY FOREIGN AFFAIRS ONLY.
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